

Confedred alle by bonde of Crueltee,  
And been assented that I shal be sleyn.  
And I have put my compleynt up ageyn;  
For to my foos my bille I dar not shewe,  
Theffect of which seith thus, in wordes fewe:

The Bille.



HUMBLEST of herte, hiest  
of reverence,  
Benigne flour, coroune of  
vertues alle,  
Sheweth unto your rial  
excellence  
Your servaunt, if I durste  
me so calle,  
His mortal harm, in which he  
is yfalle,  
And noght al only for his evel fare,  
But for your renoun, as he shal declare.

Hit stondeth thus: your contraire, Crueltee,  
Allyed is ageynst your regalye  
Under colour of womanly Beautee,  
for men ne shuld not knowe hir tirannye,  
With Bountee, Gentillesse, and Curtesye,  
And hath deprieved you now of your place  
That hight Beautee, apertenant to Grace.

for kyndly, by your heritage right,  
Ye been annexed ever unto Bountee;  
And verrayly ye oughte do your might  
To helpe Trouthe in his adversitee.  
Ye been also the coroune of Beautee;  
And certes, if ye wanten in thise tweyne,  
The world is lore; ther nis no more to seyne.

Ek what availeth Maner and Gentillesse  
Withoute you, benigne creature?  
Shal Crueltee be your governesses?  
Wherfor, but ye the rather take cure  
To breke that perilous alliaunce,  
Ye sleen hem that ben in your obeisaunce.

And further over, if ye suffre this,  
Your renoun is fordo than in a throwe;  
Ther shal no man wite wel what Pite is.  
Alas! that your renoun shul be so lowe!  
Ye be than fro your heritage ythrowe  
By Crueltee, that occupieth your place;  
And we despaired, that seken to your grace.

Have mercy on me, thou Herenus quene,  
That you have sought so tenderly and yore;  
Let som stream of your light on me be sene  
That love and drede you, ay lenger the more.  
for, sothly for to seyne, I bere the sore,  
And, though I be not cunning for to pleyne,  
for Goddes love, have mercy on my peyne!

My peyne is this, that whatso I desire  
That have I not, ne nothing lyk therto;  
And ever set Desire myn herte on fire;

Eek on that other syde, wherso I go,  
What maner thing that may encrease wo  
That have I redy, unsoght, everywhere;  
Me ne lakketh but my deth, and than my bere.

What nedeth to shewe parcel of my peyne?  
Sith every wo that herte may bethinke  
I suffre, and yet I dar not to you pleyne;  
for wel I woot, although I wake or winke,  
Ye rekke not whether I flete or sinke,  
But natheles, my trouthe I shal sustene  
Unto my deth, and that shal wel be sene.

This is to seyne, I wol be youres ever;  
Though ye me slee by Crueltee, your fo,  
Algate my spirit shal never disseyver  
fro your servyse, for any peyne or wo.  
Sith ye be deed, alas! that hit is so!  
Thus for your deth I may wel wepe and pleyne  
With herte sore and ful of besy peyne.  
Here endeth the exclamacion of the Deth of  
Pyte.

THE COMPLEYNT OF MARS.  
The Proem.



LADETH, ye foules, of the  
morow gray,  
Lo! Venus risen among yow  
rowes rede!  
And floures fresshe, hon-  
oureth ye this day;  
For when the sonne uprist,  
then wol ye sprede.  
But ye lovers, that lye in any  
drede,  
fleeth, lest wikked tonges yow espye;  
Lo! yond the sonne, the candel of jelosye!

With teres blewe, and with a wounded herte  
Taketh your leve; and, with seynt John to  
borow,  
Apeseth somewhat of your sorowes smerte,  
Tyme cometh eft, that cese shal your sorow;  
The glade night is worth an hevvy morow!  
(Seynt Valentyne! a foul thus herde I singe  
Upon thy day, er sonne gan upspringe).

Yet sang this foul: I rede yow al awake,  
And ye, that han not chosen in humble wyse,  
Without repenting cheseth yow your make.  
And ye, that han ful chosen as I devyse,  
Yet at the leste renoveleth your servyse;  
Confermeth it perpetuely to dure,  
And patiently taketh your aventure.

And for the worship of this hye feste,  
Yet wol I, in my briddes wyse, singe  
The sentence of the compleynt, at the leste,  
That woful Mars made atte departinge  
fro fresshe Venus in a morweninge,  
Whan Phebus, with his fyry torches rede,  
Ransaked every lover in his drede.



MYLON the thridde  
hevenes lord above,  
As wel by hevenish  
revolucioun  
As by desert, hath wonne  
Venus his love,  
And she hath take him in  
subjeccioun,  
And as a maistresse  
taught him his lessoun,  
Comaunding him that never, in hir servyse,  
he nere so bold no lover to despyse.

for she forbad him jelosye at alle,  
And cruelte, and bost, and tirannye;  
She made him at hir lust so humble and talle,  
That when hir deynd caste on hym her ye  
he took in pacience to live or dye;  
And thus she brydeleth him in hir manere,  
With nothing but with scourging of hir chere.

Who regneth now in blisse, but Venus,  
That hath this worthy knight in governaunce?  
Who singeth now but Mars, that serveth thus  
The faire Venus, causer of plesaunce?  
He bynt him to perpetual obeisaunce,  
And she bynt hir to loven him for ever,  
But so be that his trespass hit disseyver.

Thus be they knit, and regnen as in heaven  
By loking most; til hit fil, on a tyde,  
That by hir bothe assent was set a steven,  
That Mars shal entre, as faste as he may glyde,  
Into hir nexte paleys, to abyde,  
Walking his cours til she had him atake,  
And he preyde hir to haste hir for his sake.

Then seyde he thus: Myn hertes lady swete,  
Ye knowe wel my mischef in that place;  
for sikerly, til that I with yow mete,  
My lyf stant ther in aventure and grace;  
But when I see the beaute of your face,  
Ther is no dreed of deth may do me smerte,  
for al your lust is ese to myn herte.

She hath so gret compassion of hir knight,  
That dwelleth in solitude til she come;  
for hit stood so, that ilke tyme, no wight  
Counseyled him, ne seyde to him welcome,  
That nigh hir wit for wo was overcome;  
Wherfore she spedde hir as faste in hir weye,  
Almost in oon day, as he dide in tweye.

The grette joye that was bitwix hem two,  
Whan they be met, ther may no tunge telle,  
Ther is no more, but unto bed they go,  
And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle;  
This worthy Mars, that is of knighthod welle,  
The flour of fairnes lappeth in his armes,  
And Venus kisseth Mars, the god of armes.

Sojournd hath this Mars, of which I rede,  
In chambre amid the paleys prively

A certeyn tyme, til him fel a drede,  
Through Phebus, that was comen hastely  
Within the paleys, yates sturdely,  
With torche in honde, of which the stremes  
bryght  
On Venus chambre knockeden ful lighte.

The chambre, ther as lay this fresshe quene,  
Depeynted was with whyte boles grette,  
And by the light she knew, that shoon so shene,  
That Phebus cam to brenne hem with his hete;  
This sely Venus, dreynt in teres wete,  
Enbraceth Mars, and seyde, Alas! I dye!  
The torch is come, that al this world wol wrye.

Up sterte Mars, him liste not to slepe,  
Whan he his lady herde so compleyne;  
But, for his nature was not for to wepe,  
Instede of teres, fro his eyen tweyne  
The fyry sparkes brosten out for peyne;  
And hente his hauberk, that lay him besyde;  
flee wolde he not, ne mighte himselven hyde.

He throweth on his helm of huge wighte,  
And girt him with his swerde; and in his honde  
His mighty spere, as he was wont to fighte,  
He shaketh so that almost it towonde;  
ful hevvy he was to walken over londe;  
He may not holde with Venus companye,  
But bad hir fleen, lest Phebus hir espye.

O woful Mars! alas! what mayst thou seyn,  
That in the paleys of thy disturbaunce  
Art left behinde, in peril to be sleyn?  
And yet therto is double thy penaunce,  
for she, that hath thyn herte in governaunce,  
Is passed halfe the stremes of thyn yen;  
That thou nere swift, wel mayst thou wepe  
and cryen.

Now fleeth Venus unto Cylenius tour,  
With voide cours, for fere of Phebus light.  
Alas! and ther ne hath she no socour,  
for she ne fond ne saw no maner wight;  
And eek as ther she had but litil might;  
Wherfor, hirselves for to hyde and save,  
Within the gate she fledde into a cave.

Derk was this cave, and smoking as the helle,  
Not but two pas within the gate hit stood;  
A naturel day in derk I lete hir dwelle.  
Now wol I speke of Mars, furious and wood;  
for sorow he wolde have seen his herte blood;  
Sith that he mighte hir don no companye,  
He ne roghte not a myte for to dye.

So feble he wex, for hete and for his wo,  
That nigh he swelt, he mighte unneth endure;  
He passeth but oo steyre in dayes two,  
But ner the les, for al his hevvy armure,  
He foloweth hir that is his lyves cure;  
for whos departing he took gretter yre  
Thanne for al his brenning in the fyre.